UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1999/132
24 March 1999

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-fifth session
Agenda items 9 and 14 (b)

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD

SPECIFIC GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS: MINORITIES

Letter dated 22 March 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights

I have the honour to transmit, enclosed herewith*, a statement by the Government of the Republic of Serbia. I would like to ask you to have it circulated as an official document of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda items 9 and 14 (b).

(signed) Branko BRANKOVIC
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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* The enclosure is reproduced as received, in English only.

GE.99-11668 (E)

SERBIAN GOVERNMENT ENDORSES THE STAND OF ITS DELEGATION TO THE PARIS TALKS

The Serbian Government held a session on Friday chaired by Prime Minister Mirko Marjanovic, at which it fully endorsed the stand of its delegation and of Serbian President Milan Milutinovic at the Paris talks on Serbia's Kosovo and Metohija province. The state delegation has upheld the principles and norms of international law and defended duly and in a principled manner the legitimate interests of the state and all its citizens regardless of their ethnicity, the Information Ministry said in a statement. However, the attempts to impose the US-ethnic Albanian agreement on separating a part of Serbia's and Yugoslavia's territory as a dictate constitutes an unprecedented violation of all international rules, the statement says. It clearly and openly demonstrates the intention to create a State within a State with the help of foreign troops, paving the way for discrimination of the majority of ethnic communities and for ethnic cleansing of Kosovo and Metohija of its non-ethnic Albanian population, which would lead to a gradual secession of the province and dismembering of Serbia and Yugoslavia, the statement says.

The Serbian Government most strongly condemns the NATO threats of aggression, which constitute open support to separatism and terrorism and a violation of the basic principles of the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the very foundations of the international legal order, the statement says. The NATO member-states are using their alleged concern with the movements of Yugoslav defense forces in their own land to draw the attention away from the concentration of their own troops and armaments in neighbouring states and thus cover up their aggressive plans for separating a part of Serbia's and Yugoslavia's territory, the statement says. We cannot and will not allow this. We shall not give up even the smallest part of our territory or our sovereignty to anyone, the statement says. The Serbian Government, its political leadership, all parliamentary parties and the entire people are determined to defend Kosovo and Metohija, the cradle and the heart of Serbia and the foundation of its statehood, the statement says.

Serbia's authority cannot be removed from Kosovo and Metohija, nor can the province be removed from Serbia. Serbia has always defended truth, principles, European and civilizational values. Serbia strongly rejects ultimatums and threats of aggression and remains steadfast in the defense of its legitimate national interests. Serbia will not allow discrimination, secession or occupation, the statement says. Problems in Kosovo and Metohija can and must be resolved only by peaceful and political means. Serbia remains committed to dialogue and consultations aimed at finding a political settlement for autonomy and political self-rule in Kosovo and Metohija, providing guarantees of equality to all ethnic communities within the framework of Serbia's and Yugoslavia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, on the basis of the 10 principles set by the Contact Group and of the highest international standards regarding protection of human rights, and in line with the supreme laws of Serbia and Yugoslavia, the statement says. A political agreement that should guarantee equality to all ethnic communities in Kosovo and Metohija can be reached only through dialogue among legitimate

representatives of all ethnic communities and representatives of the sovereign state, the statement says. Such a political agreement must be based on clear principles and provisions for self-rule, autonomy and equality, and can be implemented only by political means, the statement concludes.